quite impossible to exclude from reservation all lands within a radius of 4 miles from existing dwelling houses as there would be very little reserve left if this suggestion were to be followed. This view seems to be right. But every care will be taken to keep reserves as far away from human habitations as possible.

118. Desirability of not giving fresh lands for rubber cultivation to outsiders in preference to natives.

Mr. Aiyappan Pillai and Mr. Kuruvila Devasya (Minachil) brought forward this subject.

Reply.—No preference is ever shown to one class of applicants as against another. When it is considered advisable to part with Government lands for rubber cultivation, they will be sold to outsiders or natives without distinction. But it so happens that applications from the latter are rare.

119. Scantiness of rain on account of the clearing of large areas of forest lands for rubber and other cultivation.

Mr. R. Narayana Iyer and Mr. Kanakku Parameswaran Krishnan (Kottarakara) pointed out that one result of the indiscriminate grant of forest lands for rubber and other cultivation to European planters was a steady decrease in rainfall and prayed that in future no more lands be sold or permitted to be cleared for planting purposes in the State.

Reply.—This is a controversial question. Dr. Ribbentrop is of one opinion in this matter, but our Conservator differing from him thinks that the clearing of forests conduces to increased rainfall, that the destruction of forests in many countries has been followed by the occurrence of floods and that the only effect of forests on rainfull is to secure evenness. I called for a statement of rainfall in the State for the last forty years, but statistics were available only for twenty. The figures vary and do not seem to warrant any safe conclusion. They have however been put into the hands of the Conservator and the Superintendent of the Agricultural Demonstration Farm, for report as to whether any and what inference could be drawn from them. In that connection, due consideration will be given to the opinion now expressed.

120. Abolition of duty on firewood.

Mr. V. Sankaranarayana Iyer, B. A., B. L., (Agastisvaram)

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said that this was one of the subjects brought forward at the last session of the Assembly and Government then promised to afford some relief in the direction prayed for. Tax on firewood was accordingly suspended for 6 months, but had been revived at the reduced rate of 4 as. per ton. There were very few waste lands in Travancore as compared with other countries and he prayed that the tax in question might be abolished altogether.

Mr. M. D. Daniel, B. A., (*T. I. C., Nagercoil*) represented that the tax on firewood fell heavily on the population living in towns. In rural parts, people had other sources to fall back upon, but town-residents could only look to fuel reserves for firewood. 4 annas' tax to the supplier of firewood meant at least a rupee to the consumer and as the practical hardship resulting from the present arrangement was considerable, he prayed for the duty being abolished altogether.

Mr. T. Marthandan Tampi, B. A., (*Trivandrum*) said that fuel was a necessity of life and should not be taxed. The duty mainly affected only the richer portion of the population living in towns and it was open to the Government to tax these alone in any less obnoxious way. In any case, he prayed that this tax on fuel might be abolished.

Mr. Kanakku Mathevan Mathevan (*Nedumangad*), *Mr. Ousep Kuriya Aippu* (*Muvattupuzha*), *Mr. Narayanan Velayudhan* (*Pattanapuram*) *and Mr. K. Kochu Thomman* (*Chengannur*) also spoke in support.

Reply.—Fuel, reeds, &c., removed from the unreserved forests should pay duty, but fuel when taken on head-loads is allowed free. The object of Government in making these charges is to prevent their indiscriminate removal so that there may be something left for future generations. The indiscriminate cutting and removal of fuel, reeds and other forest produce has to be strictly prohibited. The Forest department must cut and collect fuel, reeds, &c., and store them in depôts for sale at moderate prices. The duty on firewood removed from unreserved forests has been reduced to 4 as. per ton, *i. e.*, 2 as. per cart. This arrangement has been sanctioned up to the end of 1082. As regards fuel removed from reserved forests, the Conservator says that the existing fee of one rupee per ton should not on any account be reduced. The working of the present

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arrangement will be watched before any further change is thought of.

121. Permission to private persons to cut down forest trees on payment of kuttikanom.

Mr. R. Narayana Iyer and Mr. Kanakkn Parameswaran Krishnan (Kottarakara), Mr. Kanakku Mathevan Mathevan (Nedumangad) and Mr. Thuppan Thuppan Numburipad (Kunnatnad) said that people were put to much difficulty in having to travel long distances to the depôts even in cases where only small quantities of timber were required, and requested that permission might be freely given for cutting and removing forest trees on payment of the seigniorage due to Government.

Mr. M. Narayana Panickar (Ampalapuzha) prayed that this permission might be granted at least in cases where timber was required for making canoes.

Reply.—Government have already decided against the kuttikanom system in regard to timber as bringing about enormous and uncontrollable waste. Exceptions are made for *bona fide* house-building purposes in localities far removed from depôts. As regards timber for canoes, permits are even now given.

122. Permission to holders of lands registered after 1068 without any special condition regarding the non-royal trees standing on them, to cut them down on permits or passes, and the relinquishment of the claim of Government over royal trees standing on private lands.

Mr. Ousep Kuriya Aippu (Muvattupuzha) brought up this subject and prayed for favourable orders.

Reply.—As regards non-royal trees, in cases where, though there has been no condition at the time of the registry, the holders without giving notice at once under section 58 of the Forest Regulation have entered into an undertaking which in effect has extended the period for notice, they will be allowed to give such notice within the next three months. But in cases where there has been no such undertaking, and it is believed that these will be rare, Government are disposed to consider the desirability of foregoing their right to the value of the trees in favour of the holders when individual applications are made. The prayer regarding royal trees cannot be granted.

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